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Voting Rights | Election Reform

# ACLU Asks Registrars in First Congressional District to Make Certain that Poll Workers Are Trained to Inform Voters of Alternatives to Showing ID

**December 12, 2007**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**CONTACT: [media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)**

Richmond, VA -- The American Civil Liberties Union of Virginia is sending today a memo to every voter registrar in the First Congressional District, where a special election will be held tomorrow to elect a replacement for Rep. Jo Ann Davis, who recently passed away. The memo asks registrars to make certain that poll workers inform voters that they are permitted to vote even if they are not carrying any form of identification with them.

Under Virginia law, individuals may vote even when they cannot produce any form of paper ID. In these instances, voters merely need to sign an Affirmation of Identity form. The form does not allow unregistered voters to cast ballots, but if a voter is properly registered he or she merely needs to affirm his or her identity in order to vote. Using a false identity under such circumstances is a felony.

"Virginia law is fair regarding voter identification," said ACLU of Virginia Executive Director. "It requires an ID if you have one, but it does not penalize if you don't. This protects those rare individuals who do not have IDs, who have lost or had their IDs stolen, and even those who simply forgot to bring their IDs to the polls."

"The problem is that poll workers often mislead voters into believing they must have an ID to vote," added Willis, "and that's simply not true."

"We've received complaints from people who were sent home to get an ID, and we've heard from people who were told outright that they could not vote."

The ACLU believes that at least some of the problem is unintentional. Poll workers often ask people to have their IDs ready so they can obtain a ballot, but they neglect to tell voters of the alternative.

Some states have attempted to revise their laws in recent years to require IDs, but such laws have been struck down as an unconstitutional restriction of voting.

~~While some maintain that IDs are needed to prevent voter fraud, the ACLU points out that, at least in recent years, voter fraud is almost never committed by individual voters. On the contrary, fraud is almost always perpetrated by the individuals who count the votes.~~

The ACLU's memo to registrars follows.

#### MEMO

TO: Voter Registrars in the First Congressional District\*  
FROM: Kent Willis, Executive Director  
DATE: December 10, 2007  
RE: Voter Identification Requirements

I am writing to ask you to remind poll workers prior to tomorrow's special election in the First Congressional District to be clear with voters that they may vote in Virginia even if they are not carrying any identification with them. As you know, such voters only need to sign an Affirmation of Identity form.

During recent elections, including those held in November 2007, the primary complaint received by the ACLU of Virginia was from voters who were misled by poll workers into believing they needed identification in order to vote. Whether intentional or not, poll workers – and occasionally signs posted in polling places – cause voters to believe that they must have an approved form of identification with them in order to be able to vote.

We do not pretend that our information on this subject has been collected in a manner that is statistically valid, but overwhelming anecdotal evidence points to poll workers as the main source of the problem. It appears that poll workers often tell voters they must produce identification in order to vote, but do not inform them of the alternative unless pressed by voters, most of whom are not aware that they may vote without producing an ID.

Please tell your poll workers that if they plan to tell voters waiting in line to "have their IDs ready" to also add that they may vote without an ID by signing the Affirmation of Identity form. This will avoid much confusion.

I thank you for your attention.

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## Citizens' Group Helps Uncover Alleged Rampant Voter Fraud in Houston

By Ed Barnes

Published September 25, 2010 | FoxNews.com

When Catherine Engelbrecht and her friends sat down and started talking politics several years ago, they soon agreed that talking wasn't enough. They wanted to do more. So when the 2008 election came around, "about 50" of her friends volunteered to work at Houston's polling places.

"What we saw shocked us," she said. "There was no one checking IDs, judges would vote for people that asked for help. It was fraud, and we watched like deer in the headlights."

Their shared experience, she says, created "True the Vote," a citizen-based grassroots organization that began collecting publicly available voting data to prove that what they saw in their day at the polls was, indeed, happening -- and that it was happening everywhere.

"It was a true Tea Party moment," she remembers.

Like most voter watchdog groups, she said, her group started small. They decided to investigate voting fraud in general, not just at the polling places, and at first they weren't even sure what to look for -- and where to look for it.

"The first thing we started to do was look at houses with more than six voters in them" Engelbrecht said, because those houses were the most likely to have fraudulent registrations attached to them. "Most voting districts had 1,800 if they were Republican and 2,400 of these houses if they were Democratic . . .

"But we came across one with 24,000, and that was where we started looking."

It was Houston's poorest and predominantly black district, which has led some to accuse the group of targeting poor black areas. But Engelbrecht rejects that, saying, "It had nothing to do with politics. It was just the numbers."

The task was overwhelming. With 1.9 million voters and 886 voting precincts, Houston's Harris County is the second largest county in the country -- and the key to Texas elections.

The group called for help and quickly got 30 donated computers and "tens of thousands of hours" of volunteer work. And then the questions started to arise.

"Vacant lots had several voters registered on them. An eight-bed halfway house had more than 40 voters registered at its address," Engelbrecht said. "We then decided to look at who was registering the voters."

Their work paid off. Two weeks ago the Harris County voter registrar took their work and the findings of his own investigation and handed them over to both the Texas secretary of state's office and the Harris County district attorney.

Most of the findings focused on a group called Houston Votes, a voter registration group headed by Sean Caddle, who also worked for the Service Employees International Union before coming to Houston. Among the findings were that only 1,793 of the 25,000 registrations the group submitted appeared to be valid.

The other registrations included one of a woman who registered six times in the same day; registrations of non-citizens; so many applications from one Houston Votes collector in one day that it was deemed to be beyond human capability; and 1,597 registrations that named the same person multiple times, often with different signatures.

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Caddle told local newspapers that there "had been mistakes made," and he said he had fired 30 workers for filing defective voter registration applications. He could not be reached for this article.

"The integrity of the voting rolls in Harris County, Texas, appears to be under an organized and systematic attack by the group operating under the name Houston Votes," the Harris voter registrar, Leo Vasquez, charged as he passed on the documentation to the district attorney. A spokesman for the DA's office declined to discuss the case. And a spokesman for Vasquez said that the DA has asked them to refrain from commenting on the case.

The outcome of the efforts grew in importance the day after Vasquez made his announcement. On the morning of Aug. 27, a three-alarm fire destroyed almost all of Harris County's voting machines, throwing the upcoming Nov. 2 election into turmoil. While the cause wasn't determined, the \$40 million blaze, according to press reports, means election officials will be focused on creating a whole new voting system in six weeks. Just how they do it will determine how vulnerable the process becomes.

**Editor's Note:** An earlier version of this story misidentified Sean Caddle as Steve Caddle, and stated that he is currently an employee of the SEIU. Caddle is a former employee.

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## Voting Rights

# ACLU-NM To Investigate Allegations Of Voter Fraud By Secretary Of State

March 16, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: (212) 549-2666; [media@aclu.org](mailto:media@aclu.org)

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – Today, the American Civil Liberties Union of New Mexico (ACLU-NM) filed public records requests with the Office of Governor Susana Martinez and the NM Secretary of State seeking all records and correspondence related to Secretary of State Dianna Duran's announcement yesterday that her office had uncovered possible instances of voter fraud by foreign nationals. Through the requests, the ACLU-NM seeks to ensure the transparency and objectivity of the investigation.

**"We want to know the motivations behind this investigation and the validity of any assertions that the New Mexico law allowing drivers licenses for all immigrants contributed to voter fraud," said ACLU-NM Executive Director Peter Simonson. "We take claims of voter fraud seriously because they undermine voter confidence in our electoral system and tend to discourage participation in elections. We also wish to ensure that any exchange of records in this investigation did not violate voter privacy guarantees that are written into state law."**

In 2008, the ACLU-NM sued the Republican Party of New Mexico and the Bernalillo County Clerk's Office for illegally releasing confidential voter registration information to the public in an attempt to prove voter fraud.

The ACLU-NM requested the following information from the Governor's office:

All records pertaining to possible voter fraud and/or any irregularities noted in the master list of registered voters in New Mexico involving foreign nationals, including, but not limited to, any memoranda, correspondence, including email, and/or notes that discuss voter fraud and/or irregularities between the Office of the Governor and the Office of the Secretary of State.

The ACLU-NM requested the following information from the Secretary of State:

All records pertaining to possible voter fraud and/or any irregularities noted in the master list of registered voters in New Mexico involving foreign nationals, including, but not limited to, any memoranda, correspondence, including email, and/or notes that discuss voter fraud and/or irregularities and the Office of the Secretary of State's search for voter fraud in voter rolls and registrations.

All records that support the Office of the Secretary of State's allegations of possible voter fraud and/or any irregularities noted in the master list of registered voters in New Mexico involving foreign nationals, including, but not limited to the voter registrations in question.

Any documents that reflect communications between the Office of the Secretary of State and any one at the Governor's Office related to alleged and/or proven voter fraud involving foreign nationals and/or any irregularities noted in the master list of registered voters in New Mexico.

Any documents that reflect communications between the Office of the Secretary of State and the New Mexico Motor Vehicle Division related to alleged and/or proven voter fraud involving foreign nationals and/or any irregularities noted in the master list of registered voters in New Mexico.

Any documents that reflect communication between the Office of the Secretary of State and any federal agency related to alleged and/or proven voter fraud involving foreign nationals and/or any irregularities noted in the master list of registered voters in New Mexico.

Any documents that reflect communication between any parties outside of the Office of the Secretary of State—including, but not limited to faculty at the University of New Mexico and representatives of any political party—and the Office of the Secretary of State related to alleged and/or proven voter fraud involving foreign nationals and/or any irregularities noted in the master list of registered voters in New Mexico.

"The public deserves to know how the government is using their voting records and personal information and to what end," said ACLU-NM Managing Attorney Laura Schauer Ives. "Allegations of voter fraud are serious and should be subject to thorough, non-partisan scrutiny."

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**chicagotribune.com**

## ICE arrests Grayslake Filipino woman on voter fraud

By Lisa Black

Tribune reporter

4:46 PM CDT, March 17, 2011

A ~~Filipino woman~~ living in Grayslake was arrested and charged with ~~17 felony counts~~ related to ~~voter fraud~~ Thursday after being accused of falsely pretending to be a U.S. citizen and ~~voting nine times~~ in elections dating back to 2003, federal officials announced.

Maria Azada, 53, was arrested by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, which worked with an investigator for the Lake County State's Attorney's office.

Azada faces charges of perjury, mutilation of election materials, and tampering with voting machines in connection with illegal voting by a non-U.S. citizen, according to an ICE news release.

Azada allegedly ~~admitted~~ that ~~she had voted~~ in an election in February 2009 while attending an immigration benefit. It is illegal for foreign nationals to vote in national or state elections in the United States.

"A subsequent investigation revealed that ~~Azada allegedly voted nine times in primary, general and consolidated elections~~ between 2003 and 2009," according to the news release.

According to the arrest warrant, Azada allegedly falsely claimed to be a U.S. citizen on two Illinois voter registration applications.

If convicted, Azada faces up to five years in state prison on each of the two perjury counts. She also faces up to three years on each of the six counts of tampering with voting machines, and each of the nine counts of mutilation of election materials.

She is also subject to deportation, according to ICE spokeswoman Gail Montenegro.

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## Daniels urges fast end to secretary of state's voter-fraud case



Written by

Robert Annis

10:52 PM, Mar. 14, 2011

As another key staffer fled the Indiana secretary of state's office, Gov. Mitch Daniels called for a swift resolution to Charlie White's voter-fraud case -- and others called for White to quit.

White's spokesman, Jason Thomas, said in an e-mail that he resigned to "pursue other career opportunities."

Thomas, a former Indianapolis Star reporter who left in December to take the position of communications director with the incoming secretary of state, didn't respond to follow-up questions.

Thomas' resignation Monday came on the heels of the departure of another top White staffer, Deputy Secretary of State and Chief of Staff Sean Keefer, who abruptly resigned Friday.

The resignations quickly followed an impromptu and somewhat frenzied news

conference that White gave Friday, as he arrived for a hearing at Hamilton Superior Court in Noblesville, during which he said he was the victim of selective prosecution and "gotcha politics."

Julia Vaughn, policy director for watchdog group Common Cause/Indiana, on Monday called White's staff departures a sign of an office in chaos.

"It's symptomatic of the dysfunction happening now in the office," she said. "It begins and ends with White himself. He's disruptive and damaging the credibility of the secretary of state's office. He needs to do what's in the best interest of the voters and the state and resign."

White has rejected calls to quit. Daniels, a fellow Republican, said Monday that he wanted the situation resolved as quickly as possible.

"I just hope that all parties will try to move toward a swift conclusion, whatever that is, whether it's an exoneration or something

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else," Daniels said. "This is not just any other proceeding, because it involves the public interest, too. Whatever fast is, I hope they can move fast."

Indiana Democratic Party Chairman Dan Parker said Monday that "it seems yet again the wrong person is resigning."

"It's unfortunate Charlie White isn't doing what even the folks in his own party want him to do: resign," Parker said. "He's clearly not doing what's in the best interest of Hoosiers."

White pleaded not guilty Friday to seven felony charges of voter fraud, theft, perjury and fraud on a financial institution in Hamilton County. Special prosecutors claim **White lied about his Fishers address when voting in the 2010 Republican primary** in order **to hide th**at he had moved from his designated district as a Fishers Town Council member.

During White's news conference Friday as he arrived for court, he seemed to criticize Thomas for telling a reporter that he didn't know of his boss's whereabouts one day after White's indictment. White said Thomas apparently hadn't received word that White was still tending to his duties.

"I told one of my staff, and they told everyone but (Thomas)," White said.

Thomas quit Monday, soon after issuing a release naming election law attorney Jerold "Jerry" Bonnet as Keefer's replacement as deputy secretary of state.

Bonnet, a holdover from previous Secretary of State Todd Rokita's administration, had served as general counsel for the office since 2005 as well as stints as deputy secretary of state during 2008 and 2009.

Bonnet not only helped implement Indiana's photo ID law but also helped fight a legal challenge in state and federal court, according to Thomas' news release.

White's jury trial is scheduled for Aug. 8 in Hamilton Superior Court, although White's attorney Dennis Zahn said he might seek a change of venue or bring in a jury "that's not as deluged by the local media."

Contact Star reporter Robert Annis at . Follow him at [twitter.com/RobertAnnis](https://twitter.com/RobertAnnis).

**Star reporter Jon Murray contributed to this story.**

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## Scottsdale pair charged with voter fraud

by Ofelia Madrid - Mar. 8, 2011 12:34 PM  
 The Arizona Republic

Two Scottsdale residents have been charged with voter fraud after a cross-search of voter rolls in Arizona and Nevada revealed they had voted once in each state in the November 2008 general election, according to the Secretary of State's Office.

Peter Canova and Gina Thi Canova were charged March 4 with 15 counts of voter fraud, including false registrations, illegal voting and filing false instruments, according to Maricopa County Superior Court documents.

The violations are class 5 and class 6 felonies, and each count is punishable by up to 2.5 years in prison, said a spokesman in the Arizona Secretary of State's Office.

"Aggressively pursuing voter fraud sends the message that Arizona will not tolerate those seeking to illegally influence our elections," said Secretary of State Ken Bennett in a written statement. "While the program was originally intended to purge voter rolls of inaccurate data, it has also given us another tool to combat voter fraud."

Peter Canova cast a ballot in the Jan. 28, 2008, presidential primary in Maricopa County, while Gina Canova voted in the Nov. 3, 2009, Scottsdale Unified School District override election and in the 2010 primary election in both Maricopa County and Douglas County, Nevada, court documents allege.

The Canovas voted in Arizona while knowing they were not entitled to vote in Arizona, the documents state.

Arizona has joined with more than a dozen other states to exchange voter registration and voter history information with election officials.

Last year, this program led to the conviction of a voter from Green Valley who voted both in Arizona and Kansas.

"When we find the rare instance of voter fraud, rest assured we are vigorously prosecuting the offenders to the fullest extent of the law," Bennett said.

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